



February / March 2003

SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the School Budgeting and Accounting Division

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Legislative News

OPI Legislative Bill Updates --
[Superintendent's web page](#)

Budget Data Sheets Issued March 1

Preliminary Budget Data Sheets for FY 2003-04 containing ANB, Direct State Aid, Guaranteed Tax Base (GTB), and special education block grant rates are posted on the OPI Website. OPI sent each district an email message notifying them the files were posted on the OPI Website at the following location:

<http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/0000D9D9-80000007/000169F1-80000007/>

If funding levels change, Budget Data Sheets will likely be revised after the Legislative Session ends in April. OPI Contact: Nica Carte (406) 444-4401 or ncarte@state.mt.us.

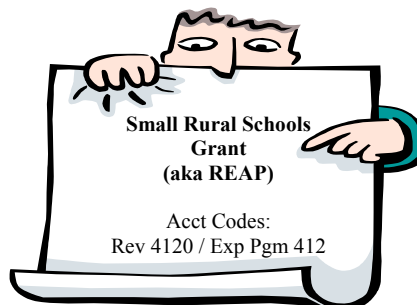
1st Semester Transportation Payments

OPI will make the 1st semester transportation aid payment on March 25. The payment will appear on the same document that shows the monthly Direct State Aid and State Special Ed payments. As usual, OPI will send an official email to notify you of the payment.

At the time you receive the state payment, the county will pay you its portion of the 1st semester payment, too. Contact: Maxine Mougeot (406)444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

GASB 34 News: Workgroup

During February, OPI staff again met with a group of clerks and auditors to discuss GASB 34 issues related to schools. Notes from the meetings are posted on the School Finance GASB 34 website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/gasb34.html> for any interested parties to follow. The group will plan follow-up meetings as needed. Contact Denise Ulberg at (406) 444-0783 or dulberg@state.mt.us.



Making the Most of OPI Official E-mail

Two years ago, OPI created the Official E-Mail service to communicate with

school districts. A "static" account has been created for each district, so that messages can be sent to the district (i.e., a legal entity) rather than a particular individual who works within that entity. The official accounts allow a school to auto-forward mail to any e-mail of their choice. As e-mail addresses change within your district, please make sure you adjust the auto-forward settings within your official account. Instructions on how to setup your official accounts can be found at: <http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Officialemail.html>. You may also Login directly to your account at <http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Login/>. If you need assistance maintaining your account, please e-mail us at Support@metnet.state.mt.us or call our help desk at 406-444-1626.

Questions or comments about this newsletter? Contact Joan Anderson at (406) 444-1960 or janderson@state.mt.us.

MASBO Plans Budget Workshops

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) will hold budget workshops in 3 locations during March and April. One workshop was held March 10 in Missoula. Other sessions are planned for March 31 in Great Falls and April 7 in Billings. Participants will bring their district's budget data sheets, enrollment reports, and prior year budgets and will work through the general fund budget during the session using manual worksheets. Presenters will be MASBO members Gwyn Andersen and Betty Brumwell, and OPI staff member Joan Anderson. Bonnie Maze and Nancy Hall from OPI also are available to offer individual help during the sessions. There is a charge for the workshop.

For trustees and others who prefer a shorter overview of school budgeting, sessions will be held a day earlier in each location: March 30 in Great Falls, and April 6 in Billings. Contact Lynda Brannon, MASBO Executive Director, at (406) 442-5599 to register.

Question of the Month:

Can We Hold a Technology Fund or Flexibility Fund Election this year?



Technology, yes. Flexibility, no. Both funds will appear on the FY 2003-04 budget. However, OPI will not be making any state payments under either of the funds for FY 2003-04 unless Legislation appropriates the funding after this writing, which is not likely. Districts may ask for voter approval for a limited Technology Fund levy under 20-9-533, MCA. Districts cannot ask voter approval for a Flexibility Fund levy because law restricts the voted levy to a percentage of the state's payment, which will be zero (20-9-544, MCA). OPI Contact: Bonnie Maze (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@state.mt.us.

Indirect Cost Applications

Applications for indirect cost rates for FY2003-04 will be mailed to schools by the end of March and will be due to OPI in May. Indirect cost rates are OPTIONAL, but a district must have a rate approved by OPI each year in order to draw indirect cost recoveries off state and federal grants. OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt (406) 444-1257 or joberembt@state.mt.us.

FY 2003-04 Tuition Rates

The maximum regular education tuition rates for attendance during FY 2003-04 have not changed since last year.

Rates will be:

- \$390 for Pre-K and Kindergarten
- \$781 for grades 1-8
- \$1,041 for grades 7-8 if the school runs an accredited 7-8 program or junior high
- \$1,041 for grades 9-12

Rates are set under MCA 20-5-323 based on 20% of the per-ANB rate for the year of attendance. Special education add-on rates are calculated under ARM 10.16.3818. Additional information on tuition in Montana is posted on the OPI web site at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/SchoolFinance/Tuition.html>. OPI Contact: Joan Anderson (406) 444-1960 or janderson@state.mt.us.

New Clerk's Workshop, April 24 & 25

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) will hold a 2-day training session for new clerks on April 24 & 25, 2002, in Helena. Several OPI staff will also present portions of the session. Topics include all aspects of the school district clerk/business manager's job. The session is intended for clerks that are new within the past 1-2 years, but all interested parties are welcome. MASBO will charge for the seminar and pre-registration is required. To register, contact Lynda Brannon (MASBO) at (406) 442-5599 or masbo@intch.com.



CFDA Numbers for Federal Grants

OPI recently updated and posted the list of Catalog of Federal and Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Numbers for the grants that are commonly received by local education agencies in Montana. The list is included as Appendix F of the OPI State and Federal Grants Handbook. You can find it on the OPI website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/FederalPrograms/handbook.html>. OPI Contact: Mike Waterman (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@state.mt.us.

In case you missed it....

**A-133 audits for FY02 are due by
March 30.**

Contact Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524 or
mwaterman@state.mt.us.

Endowment Funds: Plan to Move "Donations" to Fund 15/Fund 85

Do you currently use an Endowment Fund (81)? If so, please review the nature of the donations you hold in that fund to make sure they comply with new requirements of GASB 34.

Under GASB 34, a national fiscal reporting standard that becomes effective for audits for some schools in FY03 and for all schools in FY04, an endowment fund is called a "permanent fund." Only the interest can be spent from a permanent fund, and the principle remains intact.

If you currently use the Endowment Fund (81) for a donation for which you are allowed to spend both principle and interest, please take steps to move the donation, along with any current year expenditures and interest revenues, to the Miscellaneous Programs Fund 15. If the donation was given using a trust document allowing expenditure of both principle and interest, you may consider using Miscellaneous Trust Fund (85) instead.

OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt 444-1257,
joberembt@state.mt.us or Joan Anderson, 444-1960,
janderson@state.mt.us.

Call for Election by March 27th

May 6 is the day the Trustee Election and any General Fund Election must be held.

March 27 is the last day trustees may "call" for an election by passing a resolution stating: 1) date of election; 2) purpose of election; 3) polling sites; 4) time polls will open, if before noon. Trustees must also appoint 3 election judges per precinct.

Refer to the School Election Handbook (see links below) for more information. OPI Contact: Mike Waterman, (406) 444-4524 or
mwaterman@state.mt.us.



Useful Websites:

OPI's GASB 34 Web
Page:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/gasb34.html>.

OPI's "Get Answers" searchable
databases:

http://data.opi.state.mt.us/scripts/rightnow.cfg/php.exe/nduser/std_alp.php? [Tip: Type in a phrase with a "+" sign before each word, like "+spring +enrollment"] If you need assistance, call Janet Andrew at (406) 444-2765[a.m.] or Betsy Nordell at (406) 444-1626.

Bus Safety and Driver Training Videos:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/pupiltransport/DriverTrainingLib.pdf>.

School Finance forms and publications:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/forms.html>

2003 Elections Calendar:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/schoolfinance/forms/electioncal03.pdf> Need more information about elections? Contact Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524 or
mwaterman@state.mt.us.

2003 Legislative Bills Tracking:

[http://laws.leg.state.mt.us/pls/laws03/law0203w\\$.startup](http://laws.leg.state.mt.us/pls/laws03/law0203w$.startup)

List of all Official OPI E-Mails:

http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official_Mail

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